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INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM OF JURISTS FOR EAST TIMOR

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OF JURISTS
FOR EAST TIMOR

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Members from:

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It is now 18 years since Indonesia brutally invaded East Timor. The answer of Jakarta to the UN Security Council's call for the withdrawal of its forces was the official annexation of the territory. The UN, it is true, rejected the act and went on considering East Timor as a non-self-governing territory and Portugal as its Administering Power. But, meanwhile, more than 200,000 Timorese, roughly one third of the original population, lost their lives due to the violence and famine that accompanied the occupation.

The November 91 massacre at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili has to be seen against this background. It was not a spontaneous incident, but one - and certainly not the last - of a series of acts of genocide: dividing the number of deaths by the period of time since the Indonesian invasion, one reaches an average of 30 deaths a day - a Santa Cruz "incident" every week!

With the human suffering in East Timor in mind and stimulated by the independence of Namibia and the positive developments in Western Sahara and South Africa, a group of lawyers decided in 1991 to form an organisation which, within its specific field, could contribute to the ending of the foreign occupation of East Timor. It further aims at the creation of conditions that allow East Timor's people to exercise the right to self-determination as well as the enjoyment of other basic human rights. The International Platform of Jurists for East Timor (IPJET) was officially constituted during a conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, on November 10, 1991. The conference was attended by more than 60 jurists from 15 countries representing all continents.

IPJET has today around 200 members from more than 40 countries, mostly professors/lecturers at law schools, attorneys, civil servants and human rights activists. Its executive organ is the International Council composed of nine members from Australia, Belgium, Czechia, India, Macao, Netherlands, Portugal and the United States.

In implementing its aims and objectives, IPJET has undertaken the following initiatives:

* **organised or participated in debates on East Timor in universities and other fora in different countries;**
* **promoted research and publications concerning East Timor;**
* **instituted an annual international prize for legal writings of students on East Timor;**
* **tried to assist the East Timorese who were detained in East Timor and Indonesia, urging their immediate and unconditional release.**

Other initiatives include the publication of a newsletter, bibliographical research on East Timor and the maintenance of a library on the subject.

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We request advocates and jurists to fill in the attached membership form and send it to the Secretariat. We also ask you to share any information you have on East Timor with us.

Pedro Pinto Leite
Secretary-general IPJET